

Horticulture Northwest

Journal of the Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society



Volume 10

Number 4

Winter 1984/3

Horticulture Northwest is published quarterly by the Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society. Yearly membership dues start at \$15.00. Address communications regarding membership to:

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Seattle, Washington 98195

We welcome original articles, artwork and black and white photographs from contributors. Back issues of the Journal are available to members at \$2.50 each.

Horticulture Northwest

Volume 10 Number 4
Winter 1984

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Cover Illustration:

Mike Lee



Brian Halliwell, Royal Botanic Garden, Kew, England

This title, appropriate for a January article, concerns the use of the word snow as part of a common name used for many plants. There are two reasons why snow might be used: an indication that the plant flowers whilst there is still snow on the ground or immediately after it has melted; or some part of the plant is as "white as snow"; and sometimes it may be a combination of the two.

Snowbells is a perfect description for species of *Soldanella*, which is a genus almost solely confined to European mountains. Dormant and dry, the plants are hidden throughout the winter under a thick, insulating layer of snow. Growth, however, begins in the spring before the snow has gone. When the snow has thinned but there is still a transparent cover of ice crystals, the well-developed plants can be seen nestling in an "ice glasshouse". As soon as the snow has gone, the nodding, bell-shaped flowers with fringed corollas in varying shades of violet dance in the spring sunshine at the edge of the snow field. It can happen that the plant will push through the melting snow so that the flowers seem to be growing through a white carpet. Plants of *Chionodoxa* can behave in similar fashion and to these plants, mainly of the Middle East, has been given the name of Glory of the Snow.

Travelling from Asia and Europe to North America and it is here to the west of the Rockies that we find the Snow Lily. This is one of the names given to *Erythronium grandiflorum* which behaves in the same way as Snowbells and Glory of Snow by growing under the snow and soon as this melted, stretching from the edge of the snow can be seen acres of its gold flowers. Often growing with Snow Lily can be found Snow Buttercups. In North America, this name seems to be used for two quite different species, *Ranunculus eschscholtzii* and *R. adoneus*. Both have quite large, yellow flowers, although the latter is the finer; whilst not pushing through the snow they are in flower almost as soon as it has gone. In Europe, though, two other plants can be referred to as Snow Buttercups. *R. glacialis* is a plant of Alpine screens, whose flowering follows the receding snows; when they first open these are pure white but as they age they become pink and then darken to red and even crimson. *R. alpestris* which often occurs in similar places to the previous species has flowers which remain pure white so is perhaps a better contender for the common name of Snow Buttercup.

Snowdrops are usually in flower in January and almost the first to appear after snow has melted in those parts of the country where a snow cover is an annual event. *Galanthus nivalis* is native to southern and central Europe, and whilst snow may be a regular event in more northerly winters, to the south, except in mountains, it must be occasional. Flowers of all species are white, so snow in the name here can be a reference both to time of flowering and the colour of the flower.

All the species of the genus *Leucojum* are referred to as Snowflakes. None have any connection with winter for the earliest is not in flower until March. *Leucojum* is from two Greek words meaning white violet and in the 16th and 17th centuries, both Snowdrops and Snowflakes were called Bulbous Violets. Whilst the flowers in most of the species are white, those of *L. roseum* are pink.

62 Snow Daisy is an alternative general common name for all species of New Zealand *celmisias*. All occur on mountains, often at considerable altitudes, but the snow has long gone when in flower but the blooms of all are white.

Snow-on-the-Mountain is a common name give to *Euphorbia marginata*. In the genus *Euphorbia* it is not the flowers which are colourful but the bracts beneath them. In *E. marginata* these are large and striped with or sometimes completely white. It is assumed that in the mountains of Central North America this plant occurs in such numbers so as to suggest unseasonal snow.

Cerastium tomentosum has grey leaves and in June and July flowers are produced so profusely that its common name of Snow-in-Summer is apt. It is interesting to speculate whether this common name was given to this plant in the garden or in the wild for it can occur in the Alps up to 7,000 feet where from a distance it could be mistaken for a lingering snow patch.

Snowy Mespilus is a common name which in North America is applied solely to *Amelanchier ovalis*. All species of this genus produce a profusion of pure white flowers as the leaves are unfurling and in Britain this common name has been used to refer to all species.

Snowdrop Bush or Snowdrop Tree has been used for two quite different plants. As might be expected, this common name went to suggest a likeness to flowers of a species of *Galanthus* and in those of *Styrax japonica*, especially when in bud, this is so. It does need a vivid imagination to see any similarity between the flowers of the other contender *Halesia monticola*; it would have been more appropriate to have used Snowflake Tree instead.

In some species of *Viburnum* the inflorescence of true flower is surrounded by a ring of large-petalled, sterile, white flowers. There are three species in which the entire inflorescence is composed of sterile flowers and because these are so much larger than the fertile ones, the flat cymes have become globose. These are *Viburnum opulus* 'Sterile', the Fortune introductions of *V. macrocephalum* and *V. tomentosum plicatum* (now to be called *V. plicatum forma plicatum*). Because of the spherical shape of the floral structure all are called Snowball Trees.

So far it has been the flowers which are white but in Snowberry the colour is of the fruit. In Britain and the United States, this common name is used for the white-fruited species of *Symphoricarpos*; Snowberry in New Zealand is used as a common name for species of *Gaultheria*. Although all species have white fruits, pink and red are equally common.

Potentilla nivea is called Snowy Cinquefoil, but the use here is not comparative of the flowers which are yellow but to the undersurfaces of the leaves and to the flower stems which are white.

In Snow Gums, white refers to the trunks. Two species bear this common name, *Eucalyptus coccifera* and *E. niphophylla*. Both occur at the highest altitudes on Australian mountain tops where winter snow occurs and which can lie late, the former in Tasmania and the latter in Victoria and New South Wales. Snow Bark, an aptly descriptive common name, is *E. niphophloa* which occurs in the tropical Northern Territory.

In all the plants so far mentioned, it is reasonably easy to see why snow has been used as part of the common name but why Snow Gentian for *Gentiana nivalis*? Although this plant occurs on mountains in Europe, it covers a considerable altitude range from 3,000 - 10,000 feet is summer flowering and is rarely found in association with snow whilst its flowers are of gentian-blue.



3927. Snowball.—*Viburnum Opulus* var. sterile. All the fertile flowers are changed to sterile, showy ones. ($\times \frac{1}{4}$)



3923. *Viburnum tomentosum* var. plenum.—Japanese snowball. ($\times \frac{1}{3}$)



3926. *Viburnum pubescens*. ($\times \frac{1}{2}$)



3635. *Soldanella alpina*. ($\times \frac{1}{2}$)

American Horticultural Society Citation

The American Horticultural Society awarded its Amateur Citation to Mrs. Pendleton (Betty) Miller at its recent annual Congress in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This citation is annually presented to a nonprofessional (noncommercial or academic person) who has made significant contribution to horticulture.

A copy of the nomination resume follows.

Throughout the Northwest, the name Elisabeth Carey (Betty) Miller is synonymous with horticulture. Her contributions to the advancement of amateur and professional horticulture include membership on governing boards; local, state, and national committees; judging councils; lectures; and continual service to horticultural projects. A recent gift of \$488,000 in her name will help build the first horticulture library in the Northwest. It will be a part of the new Center for Urban Horticulture on the University of Washington campus, where she formerly was a regent.

Her involvements in community projects are innumerable. She was instrumental in raising \$40,000 in private funds for the initiation of a comprehensive plan involving the Lake Washington Ship Canal, now a popular Seattle attraction. Other noteworthy projects are Operation Triangle (traffic island beautification), restrictive Billboard Legislation, and as horticultural consultant for the internationally famous Seattle Freeway Park.

One of the founders of the Northwest Ornamental Horticulture Society, she has helped to bring prominent international horticulturists to Seattle. Other affiliations past or present include: The Arbor Fund (Bloedel Reserve--Bainbridge Island), Pacific Science Center Foundation Trustee, Rhododendron Species Foundation, American Horticultural Society, and University of Washington Arboretum. She currently holds membership in over 25 horticultural societies, arboreta, etc.

Active in judging activities nationwide, Mrs. Miller has lectured extensively in the Northwest as well as at national conferences of the International Shade Tree Conference and Williamsburg Garden Forum. Here support has brought her awards from the Garden Club of America, Seattle Garden Club, Massachusetts Horticultural Society, and the Seattle Mayor's Office.

Noteworthy also is Mrs. Miller's own garden--an ecologically directed representation of native species from over 25 countries. The collection includes 5,000 species representing 650 genera in over 150 different families. No visit to the Northwest is complete without a personal tour of "Betty Miller's Garden".

Her enthusiasm for horticulture, her perception and insight for its future, and her unending support certainly qualify her for this prestigious award--the Amateur Citation of the American Horticultural Society.



SIKKIM EXPEDITION--SEED SOWING NOTES

Kath Dryden, Sawbridgeworth, England

A great many of you have asked for advice as to how you should treat the seed. To experienced seed raisers, my advice is: DO NOT CHANGE YOUR METHOD.

To the less experienced, the following notes on my own method of seed sowing might be of some guidance.

Record the seed received and write the labels, making sure at all times to keep the number with the prefix, i.e., AGSES 123, etc.

Mix the seed in a tiny quantity of good, clean, very damp sand, e.g., Bedford river sand, and place in foil in a domestic refrigerator or very cool place--more refrigerator than freezer. The butter compartment is ideal. The seed will imbibe the moisture and plump up within about three to five days.

The seed mixture I use is 50 percent sphagnum peat and 50 percent of a mixture of Bedford sand, grit and perlite.

Fill a two-and-one-half to three inch plastic pot with the mixture and tap down firmly on the bench, then gently press with the bottom of another pot or seed presser. Slightly roughen the surface of the compost and sow the seed complete with its sand.

With the exception of the Ericaceae (which are not covered), cover the seeds with at least one-quarter inch of good clean grit (Chick grit is excellent).

Stand the pots in a container with about one to two inches of clean water, overnight, subsequently placing in the coolest place you have and do not let the pots dry out.

I never freeze to excess; if later we have a period of prolonged sub-zero temperatures, I bring the pots into and onto the floor of an unheated alpine house or insulate a frame with newspaper and sacks. The object is to get the seeds very cold without being desiccated by freezing. Those of you who get good snow cover will not need to bother with this--allow the snow to insulate.

In the case of hard-coated seeds which have difficulty in soaking up the moisture that they need in order to germinate, you will find it a great help to rub them gently round an old rough clay pot with fine sandpaper. Do not forget to plug the hole in the pot first!

As the seed germinates in the spring, RECORD THE DATE AND SUCCESS OF GERMINATION and move the pots to a shaded bench.

The pricking-out composts will vary with the type of plant, but it might help you to know that the soil pH was an almost constant pH 7, including the soil around the Ericaceae. The soil was very gritty and very wet, overlaid with vast quantities of Yak dung in many places, the pH of which shot up to 8! Oh yes, the lads were very thorough. Good luck!



Renewal Pruning

Dr. John A. Wott and Van M. Bobbitt
Center for Urban Horticulture

Renewal pruning is a special type of pruning which keeps deciduous old shrubs in vigorous growth. In Europe and eastern United States gardens, plants which may be 100 years of age are still vital assets in the garden. However, the renewal pruning technique keeps all the top growth on the plants to not more than three to five years of age.

There are essentially two approaches, either the three- or five-year renewal system. Each year a portion of the branches are removed to ground level. This opens up the shrub and allows air and light into the shrub's interior, which in turn encourages new basal shoots--a source of new top growth.

Three-year renewal. The idea is to remove one-third of the branches each year and specifically after the third year, everything three years old is removed. The overall character of the branching should include one-third current or one-year-old branches, one-third of two-year-old branches, and one-third of three-year-old branches.

By removing the third-year wood, you encourage new growth, much of which may need to be removed.

It is usually best to prune immediately after the shrub has flowered to ensure growth and formation of flowers for the following year. Also some thinning out and heading back may be necessary at this time.

Five-year renewal. This method is similar except that it uses a five-year span of renewal. Slower growing shrubs respond better to this system. Also, some plants flower better on older wood.

Suggested references for those who want specific pruning information are:

"All About Pruning", Ortho Book Series, 1978.

"Shrubs and Hedges", The American Horticultural Society Illustrated Encyclopedia of Gardening, 1982.

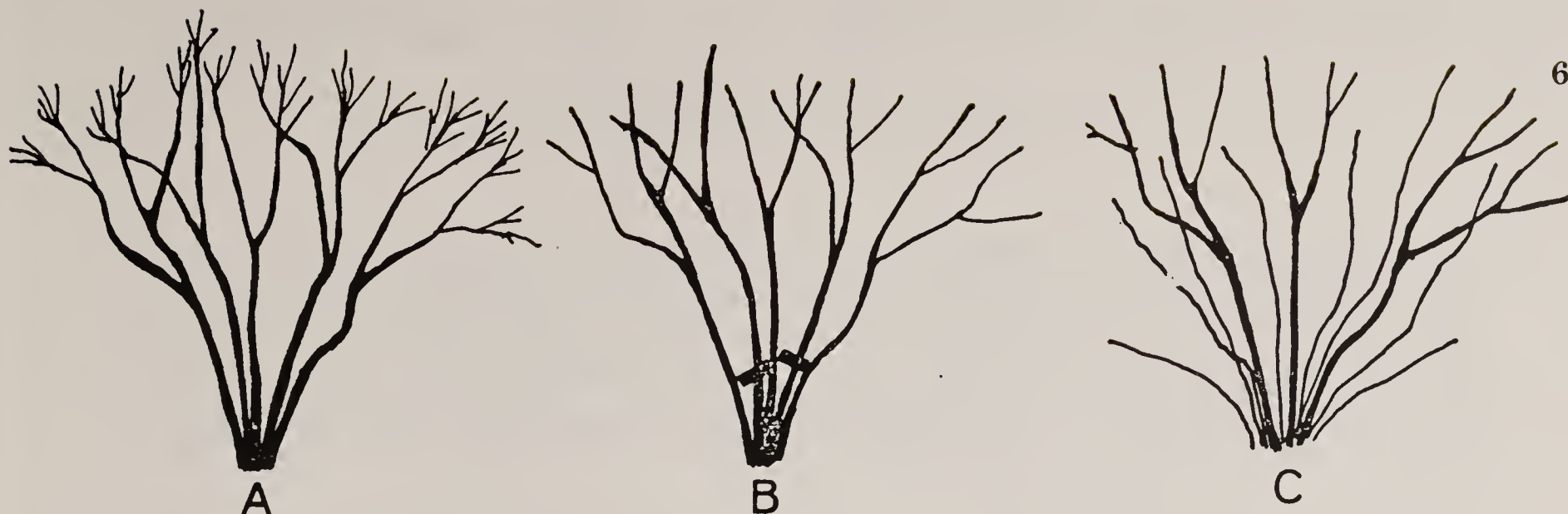


Having trouble with your pots or troughs getting coated with liverworts, mosses or algae scum? An application of Safer De-Moss Cryptocidal Soap may do the trick. Remove as much unwanted material as possible and apply to the outside of any driplines to be on the safe side.

Safer Insecticidal Soap is available by mail order from Safer Agro-Chem; 13910 Lyons Valley Road; Jamul, California, 92035.

Walter F. Bubelis





First year - A. large old bush, B. remove 1/3 of old branches at ground level, C. growth at end of first season.



Second year - D. use thinning technique to remove 1/3 of old branches, and to cut back new growth, E. growth at end of second season.



Third year - F. use thinning technique to remove remaining old branches and to cut back new growth, G. growth at end of third season (rejuvenated shrub).



68 Renovative Pruning in the Landscape

Dr. John A. Wott and Van M. Bobbitt
Center for Urban Horticulture

How many of us have suddenly faced the reality that a desirable deciduous shrub has reached a size whereby it is covering a walkway, shading other desirable plants, or has just become too large? Often such plants may need imaginative and drastic pruning. However, in a mature garden, you already may have a valuable resource in the established plant. Proper renovative pruning can often transform the overgrown shrub into a desirable landscape feature which will be useful for many future years.

First, analyze the plant. What are its assets, its liabilities? Then, start the pruning process by clearing out all weak branches, their shoots, and any of the oldest trunks which support few side branches. You are beginning to "open-up" the shrub which allows sunlight (and also better air circulation) within the shrub. Sometimes, however, it is beneficial to leave some older branches for character. Always remove inward pointing or criss-cross branches.

When pruning large shrubs, it is sometimes helpful to enlist the help of a friend, especially if you are inexperienced. Have the friend pull down various branches and decide from a distance how their reduction and/or removal may affect the appearance of the shrub.

Continue thinning and removing branches until the shrub is reduced to a desirable size, always trying to keep the natural form of the shrub. "Heading back" or severe top pruning only forces the shrub to produce more dense branches, which eventually may weaken the entire structure of the shrub.

In many plants, the removal of some branches and trunks can make the shrub completely unattractive. In these cases, cut the growth to the ground. This will stimulate new growth from the root zone. Many plants have a reserve of food in the roots which can be utilized to produce new shoots. However, drastic selection and thinning of the new growth is necessary in order to eventually achieve a satisfactorily shaped plant. It is best to use this method in the late winter or early spring.

Some shrubs will not respond to such drastic pruning and removal of all top growth will result in the death of the shrub. If you are not sure that your plant will respond satisfactorily, cut one branch back to a leafless stub. If new shoots appear on the stub, it is safe to cut the shrub back.

Some shrubs develop attractive trunk and bark patterns with age. Mature specimens can often be treated as small trees by removing lower branches which have usually thinned anyway. By thinning the top portion, the shrub may even be stimulated to produce more growth. The area under the canopy can then be planted with smaller shrubs or ground covers.

For gardeners with some pruning expertise, the Center will offer an intermediate landscape pruning class on Saturdays, March 3 and 10, 1984. It will emphasize renovative pruning of trees and shrubs and will be taught at the Washington Park Arboretum, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon by Fred Hoyt, one of our landscape gardeners. Pre-registration is required. Cost is \$15.00.



Propagation Can Be Easy

69

Brian Halliwell, Royal Botanic Garden, Kew, England

For success in rooting cuttings, some protection is needed in the form of a glass house, propagating case or a frame. However, there are some, those of deciduous subjects, which can be rooted successfully in the open ground. Success can be variable: from 100 percent regularly to just one or two occasionally. The condition of the parent plant from which the cuttings are taken will have an effect on results. These will be best when stock plants are young, not overfertilized with nitrogen, and following a warm, sunny and dry summer. Cuttings can be taken and prepared using secateurs as long as these are in good condition, properly set and with sharp cutting blades, otherwise use a sharp knife. Take material from current season's growth after leaf-fall and before mid-March. Select sturdy material from the outside of the bush; avoid thin, weak or drawn shoots. The length of each cutting will be dependent on the kind of plant and the amount of current season's growth which it produces, but will vary between three to nine inches. Make a cut on the upper portion of the cutting just above a bud and on the lower part just below. Select a part of the garden in which to root the cuttings where, if possible, the soil is light, free of perennial weeds and out in the open. Put out a tight garden line and drive the blade of spade in against it almost to the depth of the length of the cuttings, then draw the spade forward. Push the cuttings into this slit trench at four to six inches spacing with the uppermost bud just protruding. Press the soil with the heel against the cutting along the length of the row ensuring that all are firm; in a heavy soil fill the trench with sand and firm. Label each batch legibly using a waterproof ink which does not fade.

Growth will begin from the uppermost bud in April; it may be that this is the only one to develop or possibly there will be one or more from beneath ground level. With shrubs, whether one or more shoots develop, pinch out the growing points when they reach three inches. If trees, tie the strongest shoot to a stake and pinch any other shoots back to one bud. Keep the rows of cuttings free of weeds, apply pest and disease control if necessary and use irrigation in dry spells. Once the leaves fall, the rooted cuttings can be lifted and given more space, planted into their permanent positions or given to friends.

The following is a list of woody plants that have been successfully rooted from this kind of hardwood cuttings:

- Abelia X grandiflora
- Buddleia davidii
- Caryopteris spp.
- Campsis radicans
- Capsis chinensis
- Ceanothus (deciduous spp. and cvs.)
- Cornus alba (except for var. sibirica)
- Deutzia spp.
- Diervilla spp.
- Fuchsia magellanica
- Forsythia spp.
- Hibiscus syriacus
- Hydrangea paniculata

Jasminum nudiflorum
Kerria japonica
Laburnum spp.
Ligustrum vulgare
Leycesteria formosa
Lonicera standishii, *L. fragrantissima*, *L. purpusii*
Populus spp. (except for *P. tremula* and *P. tremuloides*)
Prunus cerasifera 'Purpurea'
Philadelphus spp.
Platanus orientalis (some forms) *P. lusitanica*
Physocarpus opulifolius
Ribes americanum, *R. aureum*, *R. sanguineum*, *R. speciosum*
Rhodotypos kerrioides
Rosa rugosa, *R. multiflora*, *Wichuriana* Climbers
Salix spp.
Sambucus spp.
Sorbaria arborea
Symphoricarpos spp.
Spiraea japonica, *S. canescens*, *S. X vanhouttei*
Tamarix spp.
Viburnum opulus
Wisteria sinensis
Weigelia spp.

FRUIT:

Black Currant
 Red Currant (remove every bud from the cutting except for the top three)
 Gooseberry (remove all buds except for the top three)
 Fig
 Grape Vine (*Vitis vinifera* *V. labrusca*)
 Cherry Plum

A REQUEST FROM YOUR EDITOR:

As your Editor, I spend, on the average, six hours a day trying to bring to you a first-class publication for you to be proud of. These six hours are volunteered time, as this is not and never has been a paying job. I gladly volunteer this time because I so strongly believe in the greatness of the Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society . . . I am one of its founders, you know. I always welcome with joy communication by phone, card, letter . . . whatever, . . . with any and all of our members who are passionately involved in this mutual hobby of ours. My life has been deeply enriched by our communications, old friends, to be sure, new friends, our exchange of the excitement of growing plants. I am up before dawn doing my thing, and I am available to you by phone between 7 AM and 4 PM. Before 7 AM and after 4 PM are my private times when I do not even want to think about my outside activities and commitments. Emergencies I can understand, and that is okay, my closest friends and I understand and respect this. So please do not let this be a put off . . . Call, I will love hearing from you, but no more phone calls after 4, during my private time, okay?



N.O.H.S. NOTES

Winter 1984

Supplement to the Horticulture Northwest

Shirley Gorman, Editor

President's Letter

Dear Members and Friends:

One of the important services and programs provided by N.O.H.S. is the publication of HORTICULTURE NORTHWEST, Journal of the Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society. The Journal is sent to every member and to many organizations and institutions from Scotland to Tasmania. The Journal is a valuable link in the communications in the N.O.H.S. It gives members an edge in understanding and maintaining their own gardens, an opportunity to share their own expertise, ideas and suggestions, and it keeps them up-to-date on N.O.H.S. activities and aware of what is going on in the world of horticulture.

The Journal is the product of Sallie D. Allen and her staff. In addition to her editorial talents, Sallie is an expert gardener and has one of the foremost collections of Ericaceae in the Northwest. She is also very active in the American Rock Garden Society and has travelled throughout Great Britain, attending conferences, giving lectures and visiting gardens. These activities as well as her contacts with the University and other institutions have given her considerable expertise on her own and have provided her with an ever-increasing circle of friends and acquaintances with similar interests. Many of these people, too, have contributed to the Journal, making it a significant source of horticultural information.

Sallie and her staff urge all members of N.O.H.S. to become involved in the Journal. If you feel that you are not in a position to offer an article, write in your questions, ideas or suggestions for the Tidbits column.

When reading the Journal do not miss N.O.H.S. Notes or the "Yellow Pages". This feature is edited by Shirley Gorman and keeps us up to the minute on activities of all the various horticultural organizations in our area. It also contains the names of new N.O.H.S. members. Shirley is also the Advertising Manager for the Journal and still finds time to be our Hospitality Chairman.

At the last Board meeting, Jean Wilcox reported that more than \$6,300 was raised during the last Plant Sale!! Marili Boyd says that the 1984 Lecture Series is all set and Nell Scott told of the Garden Tour plans for next year. Our profound thanks to these ladies and their committees.

I would like to wish you all a very joyful Holiday Season and a Happy New Year.

John Putnam

N.O.H.S WINTER JOURNAL 1984 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 11 10:00 a.m.	Urban Horticulture Arboretum Lecture Series "Broadleaved Evergreen Trees for Puget Sound Garden" by George Pinyuh, Area Extension Agent in Horticulture. For information call 543-8800 to learn where they will be.
January 25 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon	Explorers Walks, Arboretum Explorers walks will be given on the fourth Wednesday of the month. "The Pinetum and the Conifer Meadow", an in-depth look at one of the Arboretum's oldest collections. Tours meet at the office.
February 8 10:00 a.m.	Urban Horticulture Arboretum Lecture Series "Gardening in the Shade", Willam Halstead, Urban Horticulture Nurseryman.
February 15 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Federal Way	Rhododendron Species Foundation Learning about species rhododendron. For information call 838-4646.
February 18 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Repeat class.
February 22 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon office	Explorers Walks, Arboretum "Winter Color in the Arboretum", Bark, Twigs and Leaves in the Winter Time.
February 25, March 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31 Saturdays 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon \$35.00	Urban Horticulture Arboretum Courses "Bonsai for Beginners", Jane Nelson. The instructor is the Past President of the Puget Sound Bonsai Society.
February 29 10:30 a.m. Museum of History and Industry 2161 E. Hamlin, Seattle	N.O.H.S. Lecture Series Dr. Molly Sanderson, "Gardening in Ireland". Dr. Sanderson is a medical doctor living in Northern Ireland; she specializes in mixing herbaceous plant material with shrubs to create borders. She has a collection of very rare plants.
March 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31	"Bonsai for Beginners" continuing classes, started February 25.
March 10 Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Rhododendron Species Foundation Annual Volunteer Plant Sale, office parking lot, Federal Way, Washington.
March 14 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon Federal Way	Rhododendron Species Foundation Volunteer Orientation Sessions, learning what the volunteer can become involved in.
March 13 and 15 Tuesday, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Thursday, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. \$30.00	Arboretum Courses "Planting to Attract Birds", learn how to landscape your yard to attract birds and other wildlife. Instructors Stephen Penland and Philip Fortunato.

March 17 and 24
Saturdays
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

Repeat class

March 25
1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Federal Way
\$2.00 Adults

Rhododendron Species Foundation
Early Blooming Species Walks, self-tour through 23 acres
of woodland setting. Information, call 838-4646.

March 28
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
office

Explorers Walk, Arboretum
"Treasurers of Early Spring", early rhododendrons,
flowering cherries, blossoms of the witchhazel family.

March 31 departure date
to April 7

Urban Horticulture Arboretum
"California Garden and Wineries Tour" with Dr. John Wott
and Van Bobbitt, a trip to San Francisco area visiting
botanical gardens and parks, and then on to Napa Valley
wineries. Price includes transportation, lodging and
guided tours, \$395.

Looking Ahead:

April

N.O.H.S. Spring tour, The Gardens of the Hugh Bairds

April 30 to May 20

Rhododendron Species Foundation Tour of Japan with
Karen Gundreson, RSF Administrator. For information
call 838-4646.

May 27 through 31

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

An Invitation to Join

Barbara B. R. Mate

The dormant season at the Rhododendron Species Foundation is short and busy; garden grooming, propagation and much detail planning is underway. Leaves of rhododendrons are curled down in self-protecting swirls now. The spring bloom's season starts modestly in February and builds to a splendid crescendo in April-May-June depending on our always variable "weather."

Planting in the new Alpine Area is underway. More than 100 tons of granite have been installed in what will prove to be the most outstanding alpine garden in the Pacific Northwest. The Alpine Garden will be a fine display by Spring.

The Foundation would like to make the garden available to the media for feature stories, photography and video tape. Knowledgeable staff members make great interviewees for guided film tours or spot interviews in a garden whose international stature in the field as a Botanical Collection is growing rapidly.

The Garden nestled in a 24-acre southwest corner of the Weyerhaeuser Corporate Headquarters in Federal Way, Washington, houses the largest collection of the Genus Rhododendron in the world.

A treasure house sitting in our Northwest backyard makes the days the garden is open to the public worthy of note.

Appropriately, the Washington State Flower, *Rhododendron macrophyllum*, and other northwest native rhododendrons, *R. albaflorum* which hides on mountain slopes, and lovely thickets of *R. occidentale* in Oregon, are represented at the garden.

The Garden is open to the public during the bloom season on a schedule which covers the most spectacular period. We think there is a good story in the collection's origin and the Foundation goals. This gives the media an opportunity for a meaningful public Service Announcement Series.

If names, people and regional impact are your choice, the Foundation is enriched by some remarkable individuals who have added their "color" to the Foundation. Special skills, collection forays and talents give people interest. These contributors and over 150 volunteers provide names for each regional area with local emphasis.

Rhododendron Species Foundation
P.O. Box 3798
Federal Way, Washington 98003



The Propagation Page

Marge Baird, Bellevue, Washington

According to Steve Doonan, he and Phil Pearson use the following for their Saxifrage Mix:

- 4 parts No. 2 turkey grit
- 4 parts coarse sand
- 1 part peat
- A dab of transplanter nutrients

Push a piece of one-eighth-inch wire or plastic mesh (for gutters and downspouts) down into hole of pot, far enough so there is a dent in it and it is level with the outside bottom of pot. No crockage or pebbles. The deeper the pot, the less water remains around the crown of the plant.

Cover small alpine seed with three-eighth-inch grit or screened pumice. For cuttings or small plants: mulch with one-half to one inch deep of pea gravel or crushed rock, light color for less heat retention and dark color for more; this applies to pot color also.

Feed 0-10-10 in the fall.

This method also works well for auriculas, lewisias, draba and many other alpines.

* * * * *

Transplanting tip: when moving a plant to very different soil, wash former soil off its roots before transplanting.

* * * * *

An easy, if unscientific, way to start rhododendrons from seed: fill four- to six-inch pot with a one-half sand, one-half peat mixture to within an inch of the top; then add one-quarter inch of plain sand or screened pumice; (this has all been predampened, of course!).

Sprinkle the seed sparingly on top of sand; no need to water; put a piece of glass or stiff plastic over the top and set pot in a cake pan, or something similar, with one-half inch of water in it. Keep covered until most of seed germinates, and refill the pan when needed. This can be done on kitchen or garage window sill, cool greenhouse or cold-frame.

Progress Report

73

Sylvia Duryee, Seattle, Washington

Lewisia tweedyi seed collected in 1981 was sown November, 1982. Five plants were transplanted June, 1983, two more large plants (five to nine leaves) were potted up September, 1983. A new seedling appeared during October.

From NOHS Seed: 1982 . . . *Digitalis dubia* is planted out in the garden for next summer bloom, along with *Anemone drummondii* (one plant after several tries), *Gaultheria nummularioides*, *Rhododendron minus*, and *Arenaria balearica*.

Penstemon rupicola - sown 1982 - nice plant, *Petrophytum hendersonii* - seed collected 1981, sown November, 1982 - two plants October, 1983.

Lillium columbianum - sown February, 1981, repot October, 1983 - five plants.

Lillium washingtonianum - sown February, 1981 - repot October, 1983 - one bulb.

Erythronium revolutum - sown February, 1981 repot October, 1983 - 15.

Penstemon digitalis - two tries with 1982 seed. Second try sown March, 1983, in garden now for 1984 blooms.

Luina hypoleuca - sown March, 1982, up summer 1983, repotted November, 1983.

Paeonia obovata alba - sown three separate years (one whole sowing lost to ? Seed capsules empty . . . otherwise two sets of nice plants. Very exciting to now have my own seed grown plants in my garden.

I am still working on poppies; most germinate but I have trouble moving them. Success so far is one plant of *Papaver horeulula* and one of the big white beauty, *Romneya coulteri*. This was sown April, 1983 and had a 22-inch tap root in September, but it moved and maybe . . . ?

Seed Exchange List

The Annual NOHS Seed Exchange List will be reaching you shortly. It is filled with exciting selections, many in very short supply. Do not forget that there will be seed from the Alpine Garden Societies' Sikkim Expedition, a tremendous opportunity for us all! Send in your requests for seed early so that you will not be disappointed. We would appreciate it if you would keep notes on your methods, successes and failures, so we may all learn from one another. You will find Kath Dryden's Seed Sowing Notes on page 65 of great help, but as she says, "If your method works DON'T CHANGE".



Ground Cover Renovation

Dr. John A. Wott and Van M. Bobbitt
Center for Urban Horticulture

The Ortho All About Ground Covers book states that "probably the best thing that could happen to ground covers is a good public relations man." In reality, we need to dispel the myth that ground covers are no-maintenance plants.

Because they are often used to solve problems (usually where lawns cannot be seen or be groomed), ground covers are handled like second-class citizens. But ground cover plantings are composed of individual plants which need adequate culture, i.e., watering, fertilization, and pruning.

Certain ground covers such as hypericum, English ivy, vinca, euonymus, pachysandra, ajuga, and Phlox subulata, all respond to annual pruning. These all respond to a rejuvenation mowing, but only once per year. When a relatively new ground cover planting begins to pile up a mass of bare stems (or thatch), or the growth appears to be less vigorous, it is time for mowing. The best time to mow is just prior to the beginning of the major growth cycle, which is in the spring.

Obviously, there are several methods for trimming. If you have a large ground cover area, you may want to modify your power rotary mower so that it can be adjusted to heights of four to eight inches. You must be careful to not damage the crowns of the individual ground cover plants. A collector bag on the mower is helpful in removing the clippings.

Immediately after mowing, it is usually beneficial to fertilize and water the area. This encourages the ground cover plants to resume new growth rapidly. Some weed seeds may germinate once the ground cover canopy is removed, but careful hand removal, or, if necessary, a pre-emergent herbicide may be useful.

In our area, ground covers are most often used on slopes, which means the use of a rotary mower is dangerous. One technique to be used is the nylon line trimmer popular for edging. If the foliage and stems are not too thick, such trimmers are useful. It takes a little practice to achieve a level height.

Smaller areas or plants with woody stems will need to be hand sheared. Use pruning shears on such plants as cistus, hypericum or rosemary. Be sure you wear gloves to avoid blisters. Remove pruned branches by hand or raking.



HORTICULTURAL EDUCATION FUND

We deeply appreciate the receipt of grants to our very important Horticultural Education Fund from the following generous contributors:

The Clise Agency
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Since we last reported to you on this, an integral part of our organization's purpose, \$7,136.50, has been added to this growing fund. We owe a debt of gratitude to Betty Miller for her dedication, purpose and hard work in all of her efforts to promote the ideals and goals of the Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society. (Sallie D. Allen, Editor)

MEMORIAL FUND

Contributions have been made to the Memorial Fund in loving memory of Anne Williams, by:

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Books, garden books included, have probably been underpriced for many years, and recently the prices have moved upward quickly as if to remedy that situation. Thus it is unfortunate that Lincoln Foster's excellent book, *Rock Gardening*, arrives in a reprint only 14 years after its original publication; this time in paperback at twice what the hardback original cost. The comparatively high price may limit sales of the reprint (unchanged text and drawings from the original), which will be regrettable if it happens, for the book is probably the best all-around rock gardening book that has been written in America.

I had owned this book (the 1968 edition) for several years before I really began to appreciate it. Part of the fault was mine; a Western regional bias worked against my realizing that someone from Connecticut could write authoritative words applicable to Northwest conditions. Actually, many Eastern authors indeed fail to acknowledge that there is intelligent life... much less fine gardeners... west of Pittsburgh; and Northeastern and Northwestern gardening conditions are greatly different.

But over the years my own provincialism has grudgingly given way in this instance in proportion to how much I read Linc Foster's book; he knows a very great deal about Northwest plants, and rarely missteps in his advice concerning them. This reeducation was strengthened when I had a chance to visit the author's garden this year, a garden with many Northwest plants succeeding in it, including a Connecticut rock slab gloriously crowned with a healthy sweep of lewisias.

The author seems to have realized his Glossary is out-of-the-ordinary... he leads off his book with it. It is a superior and extensive Glossary, defining things like stone chips, top-spit, plunge, pine barren, talus slope, peat block, muggs, grit, grow-on, duff, dry well, batter, alpine lawn, course, boulder field... a helpful, delightful defining of words and terms that shows much thought and attention to helping the reader.

Wisely, Lincoln Foster does not assume a purist approach to his subject. The two-word title is followed by the qualifying subtitle: *A Guide to Growing Alpines and Other Wildflowers in the American Garden*, which appropriately broadens the scope of the work. Lest there be any doubt as to his ability to separate true alpines from nonalpine plants, the author's two-page treatise on "Alpine and Saxatile Plants" stands as one of the all-time classic pieces of writing on this subject. No serious rock gardener should miss it.

The readable style of the writer speaks for itself and leads one deeper into the book, as this segment from Chapter One called "What is Rock Gardening?"

" There are many reasons why people become charmed by rock gardening. The reason may be a remote and tenuous recollection of plants combined magically with rock in a childhood experience when the ineffable perfection of a natural creation took on some special meaning now forgotten but haunting. Or it may be a glimpse of the way the Japanese create serenity with strength in a composition of

plant form and rock form, leaf texture with rock texture. Or it may be a glorious day in the rugged beauty of alpine uplands in Italy, Greece, the Rockies, or wherever the earth has thrust toward the sky, and brilliant dwarf plants have edged and laced the rocks and embroidered the turf under a blue sky in a clear, heady atmosphere. Or it may be as prosaic as this: you find yourself living in a region where the bones of the earth show through a shallow soil and you long for flowers but the terrain says no to a conventional garden, and you come to terms with it." 77

More than 300 of the book's 466 pages are devoted to the most complete Descriptive Catalogue of Plants to have appeared in an American book on rock gardening. A good, meaty selection of western American native plants is woven through the list, with accurate cultural instructions... Lincoln Foster has indeed grown a very broad selection of our region's plants. He himself points out that the Northeast is a difficult region to succeed with many of the world's alpine, and that gardeners in the Northwest, having somewhat better conditions, will have easier success. The western *Pyrola* species are here ("The dustlike seed is difficult to germinate, but with patience will produce plants if sown in sphagnum moss."), and plants that no other author has described for the garden such as *Ribes erythrocarpum*, the Crater Lake Currant... "an utterly delightful carpenter. On a north slope, clambering over rocks, it makes a dense mat of deciduous scalloped leaves. In early spring, sizable flowers of brick-red and yellow, giving an overall effect of burnt-orange, are produced in eight to 20 flowered racemes, followed by red fruit. As the rambling branches root down, it may be propagated by layers as well as by seed." He makes the plant sound well worth seeking out, even if Peck says that the petals are very small.

Primula happens to be a specialty in Linc and Timmy Foster's Connecticut garden, Millstream, and the genus gets extensive and useful treatment in the book. *Phlox*, another Foster favorite, also gets a better discussion than most rock garden books offer.

It is a pity that Timmy (Laura Louise) Foster's high-quality drawings are not as bright and distinct in the new paperback as in the original hardback volume. They are, nonetheless, useful in any appraisal of the plants illustrated. The author explains that, having carefully considered a complete revision and rewriting of his early work, he decided that a high proportion of the "modern" changes he would make were probably too transient to make a major effort worthwhile, so he decided to allow the original text to be reissued so it could again be available. Areas such as the "Descriptive Bibliography"... adequate in 1968 but quite badly dated by the time of the 1982 reissue, are victims of this decision, and perhaps exceptions to the basic plan might have been wise.

To those unlucky enough not to have purchased the hardback book earlier, I can state that the reprint is indeed a most useful book with much information not elsewhere in print. Serious rock gardeners should own it.

Marvin Black



Tidbits

by Ladybug



An established plant of *Daphne cneorum* will sometimes develop a hole in its middle. One reader advises us he prevents this by giving the plant a good going over with the hedge shears immediately after flowering. "Trim back the outer branches, and the "hole" will fill up with new growth", he reports. Giving the same treatment to an established plant of *Lithospermum diffusum* will invigorate the plant and extend the blooming season, he adds.



"Bigger and brighter" is how one correspondent describes the new tetraploid forms of *hemerocallis*. The "tets" have twice the number of chromosomes as standard diploid daylillies, says our reader, and this trait gives them larger flowers, brighter colors, and a longer blooming season. Many have flowering stalks which are distinctly branched. The reader likes "Baja" (bright red), "Chicago Gold Coast" (vivid yellow-orange), and "Mountain Violet" (long-blooming, intense maroon purple). Because they require heat and tolerate drought, daylillies are ideal for south and west facing walls. One source for plants is Cordon Bleu Farms, P.O. Box 2033, San Marcos, California, 92069. The firm also sells hybrid Louisiana Iris.



How or if to fertilize rhododendrons will produce as many opinions as there are species and hybrids of this noble plant. In his massive *Rhododendrons of the World*, David Leach emphasizes the liking many species have for iron. A reader of this publication purchased a packet of trace elements with a high iron content and sprinkled on his rhododendrons as a "spring tonic". Leaf color deepened, and flower color intensified, he said. Just the opposite may apply to our native western azalea, *R. occidentale*. This species often grows where the soil ph is higher than that found in the Puget Sound area, and the plants may benefit from small applications of dolomite lime and/or bonemeal.



"Wherever humans garden magnificently, there are magnificent heartbreaks . . . It is not nice to garden anywhere. Everywhere there are violent winds, startling once-per-five centuries floods, unprecedented droughts, record-setting freezes, abusive and blasting heats never known before. There is no place, no garden, where these terrible things do not drive gardeners mad . . . Gardeners are the ones who, ruin after ruin, get on with the high defiance of nature herself, creating, in the very face of her chaos and tornado, the bower of roses and the pride of irises. Defiance is what makes gardeners."

Henry Mitchell
The Essential Earthman



Thank you also for the Spring copy of *Horticulture Northwest*, which I read from cover to cover. I liked particularly the article on *Tropaeolum speciosum*, because this grows wild all over the little railway stations on the West Highland line, which is the part of Scotland from which I come.

Mrs. E. R. Law, Scotland

It is with deepest regret that I must announce that my two splendid editorial assistants have moved away from our area, Janet Dabney and her husband have chosen California for their retirement home, and Claudia Struble and her husband have been transferred to the east coast for 18 months. I thoroughly enjoyed our association and do sorely miss their expertise. This leaves your Editor again in need of assistance. I would appreciate an expert typist, an editorial assistant, proofreaders and people who have contacts who will write unique and fascinating material for the delight and education of our members. Don't forget, each of you can write a tidbit of one, two or three lines to inform us all of your exciting discoveries. You are the gardeners, you are the experts . . . share with us. HELP is what I need. Please call you Editor, Sallie Allen, 363-3189.



EVENT: Flower arrangement and demonstration by internationally renown arranger and author from London, England: Sheila Macqueen

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TIME: 10:00 a.m.

PLACE: Museum of History and Industry
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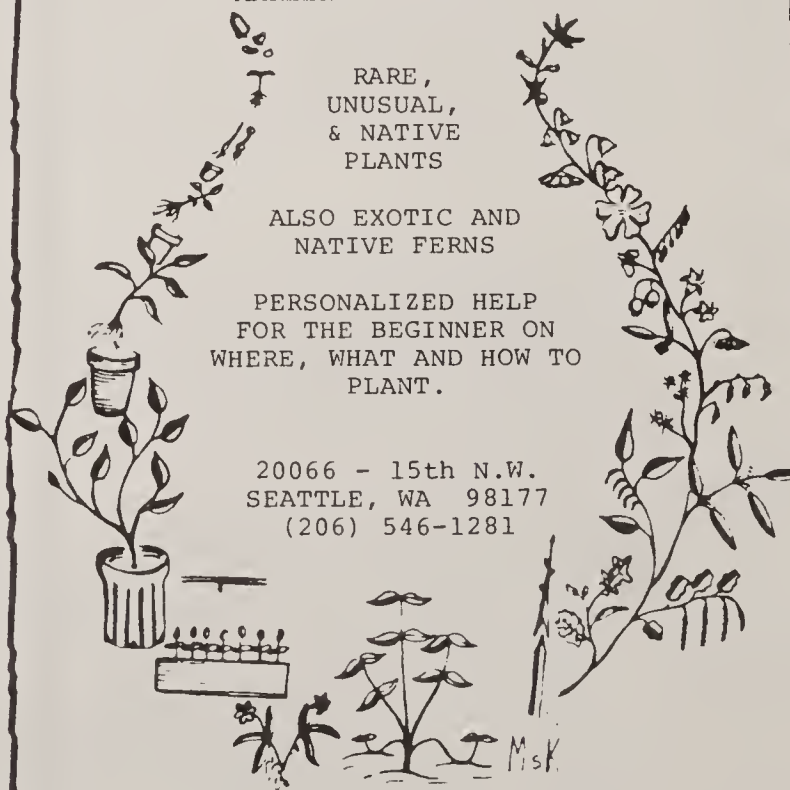
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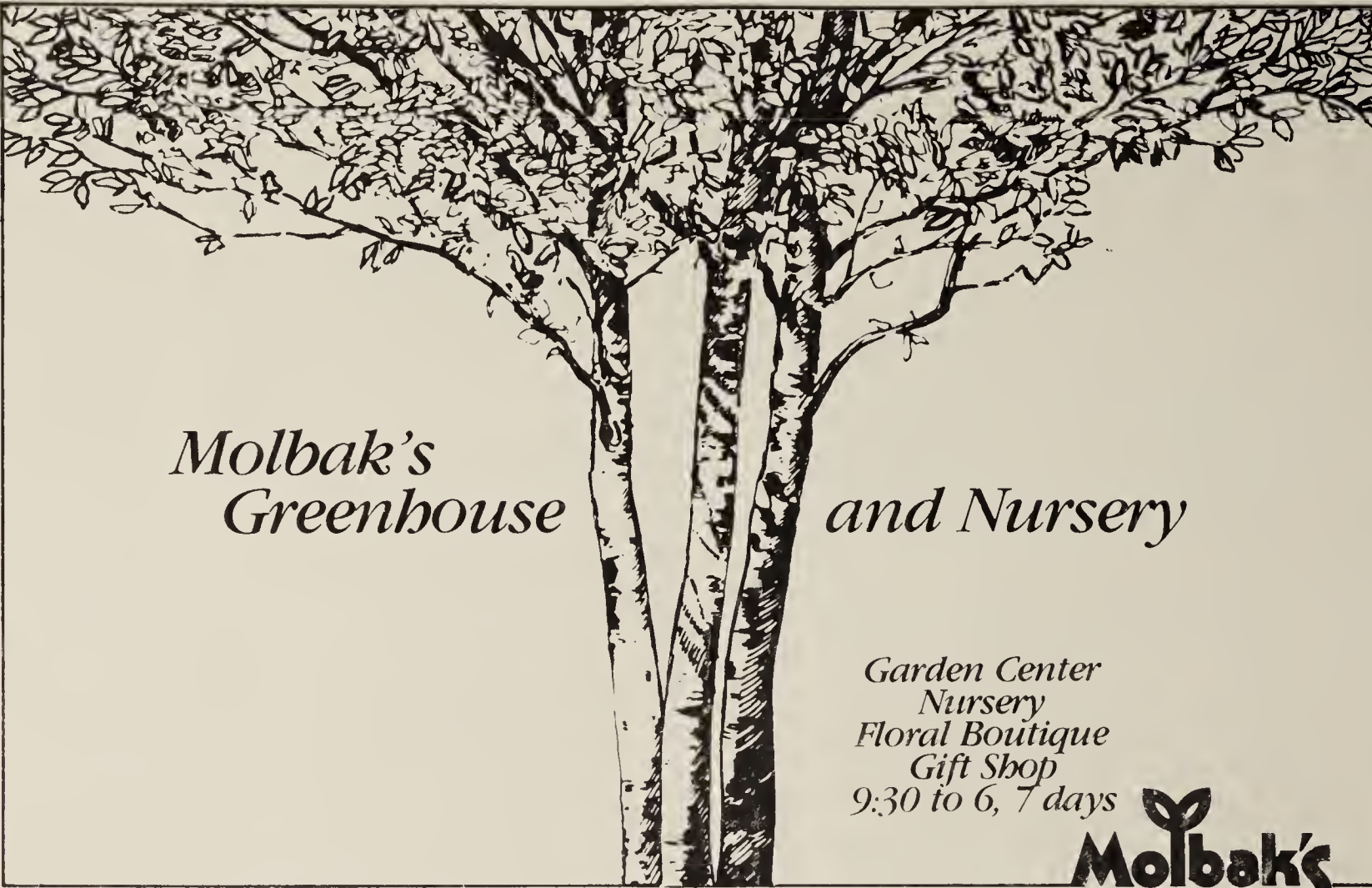
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Horticulture Northwest

Volume 10

Number 4

Winter 1984



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